



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS WORKFORCE SKILLS CABINET

CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet **MA STEM TECH Academy Exploration Grant**

The Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) was created by an Executive Order of Governor Charlie Baker on February 26, 2015. The Cabinet aligns the Executive Offices of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development toward a comprehensive economic growth agenda. The Cabinet is charged with creating and implementing a strategy to ensure that individuals can develop and continuously improve their skills and knowledge to meet the varying hiring needs of employers in the Commonwealth. The Workforce Skills Cabinet has adopted criteria to guide its collaborative work:

- **Be Demand-Driven:** Meets a business-driven need, as documented in the funding application and verified in the funding review, award, and implementation
- **Leverages Partnerships:** Builds connections between and among educational institutions (including middle/high schools, community colleges, and state colleges/universities), and between educational institutions, private sector businesses and non-profit organizations
- **Responds to Regional Plans:** Responds to Workforce Skills Cabinet Regional Planning Blueprint and aligns to existing regional economic development, workforce development, and higher education plans to meet the business-driven need
- **Maximizes Increase in Skilled Workers:** Leads to an increase in the number of skilled workers in a cost-effective way to meet business-driven hiring needs, and, to the greatest extent possible, focuses on improving the skills of students and/or individuals facing barriers to employment
- **Leverages Other Funding:** Builds on other sources of local, state, federal and private funding to meet common goals
- **Builds on Proven Programs:** Supports or expands a program that has shown proven results, or is based on a model that has shown proven results
- **Demonstrates Sustainability:** Shows evidence of the ability to sustain a contribution to the workforce pipeline after grant funds have expired

JAMES A. PEYSER
SECRETARY,
EDUCATION

ROSALIN ACOSTA (CHAIR)
SECRETARY, LABOR &
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

MIKE KENNEALY
SECRETARY, HOUSING AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MA STEM TECH Career Academy

The STEM TECH Career Academy announcement webinar recoding can be found at (please note the required Passcode: 8rK0.*Q1)

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ZSrrSaZRCYFfIP6vCA9JwyQ0uXRJ9_YNdebEHBBNA4t0NnTGDhXsG9Bz4SQ1kxcz.QytGoBMvvcMI_1r

A STEM Tech Career Academy overview presentation and subsequent materials will be posted on the STEM Advisory Council Website <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-stem-advisory-council>.

MA STEM TECH Career Academy Exploration Grant

<i>Total Grant Program</i>	<p>Up to \$6.5 Million in total funding. Award size up to \$1.25 Million.</p> <p>The Workforce Skills Cabinet will be making a multi-year grant STEM Tech Career Academy Exploration Grant commitment. Upon completion of Exploration Planning Phase funding to be awarded, Start Up Phase funding will require a partnerships MOU, implementation plan and a multi-year budget to be submitted. Continued funding for Launch Phase will require submission and approval of annual program progress reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ FY23 - Exploration Planning Phase: \$50,000○ FY24 - Start Up Phase; \$700,000: \$250,000 program resources, \$450,000 of equipment and technology contingent of completion of Exploration Phase Requirements○ FY25-FY 26 Early Implementation Phase: \$500,000 (\$250,000 program resources per year). Contingent on completing of Start-Up Phase requirements
<i>Grant Purpose and Guiding Principals</i>	<p>The purpose of this competitive targeted grant is to provide significant planning and support resources to innovative STEM Tech Career Academy models that are proposing to significantly increase the number of students served throughout the Commonwealth through thoughtful high schools to post-secondary implementation plans to achieve completion of an Associate's Degree related to Workforce Skills Cabinet priority industry sectors Healthcare, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Environmental and Life Science, and/or Business and Financial Services.</p> <p>The Boards of Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education jointly approved five Guiding Principles for Early College</p>

	<p>and Innovation pathways that are also required for a STEM Career Academy to demonstrate in program design and implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Access • Guided Academic Pathways • Enhanced Student Support • Connection to Career • Effective Partnerships
<i>Eligible Applicants</i>	<p>For this grant opportunity, programs will commit to significantly and thoughtfully expanding access. Eligible applicants are Massachusetts public Community Colleges or accredited 2-year colleges that are minority-serving institutions as defined by the United States Department of Education, or Public High School</p> <p>Either a district/K-12 institution or a qualified Institution of Higher Education (IHE) partner can serve as the lead education agency and the resources provided are intended to support all partners in exploration capacity. An organization may only be included in one application submission.</p> <p>High priority will be given to applicants that are building STEM Associate Degree bridge programs from existing Innovation Pathways and/or Early College program including those in DESE pilot program or in designation process states.</p> <p>Prioritization will be given to applicants that are proposing to reach students who currently have limited access to CVTE programming, and to those that plan to build a large-scale program with intentional scope and sequencing that allows a minimum of 400 students to participate (target of approximately 70 student per grade level).</p> <p>Each awardee will also receive support through a part-time coach secured through the Workforce Skills Cabinet who will assist with developing planning outcomes and an implementation plan.</p>
<i>Terms of Award</i>	<p>Exploration Grants will be awarded as cost reimbursement contracts, with an anticipated contract start date of December 31, 2022, and the planning grant phase completing June 30, 2023.</p>

General Contracting Information

Program Administration: This program is offered by the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet. The grant application process will be administered by the Executive Office of Education (EOE), in coordination with the Workforce Skills Cabinet.

Reimbursement

1. Exploration Grant awards are structured as cost-reimbursement grants, meaning that recipients are expected to incur expenses before receiving any funds from the Commonwealth.
2. Payments will be disbursed via electronic fund transfer (“EFT”).
3. For start up phase technology and equipment requests. EOE will require a letter of certification to confirm that the items have been delivered and/or installation has been completed. The Grantee will retain copies of all related purchasing documentation, including purchase orders, tracking information, invoices, etc. as required under the terms of the grant. The grantee understands that these records must be maintained for a period of seven (7) years for audit and review purposes and made available upon request.
4. In compliance with the Office of the State Comptroller rules and regulations, no grant recipient shall expend grant funds until a contract has been fully executed with EOE. Upon contract execution recipients will be allowed to incur costs. Costs must be incurred between contract execution and up to, including, June 30, 2023. No expenses incurred after June 30, 2023 will be reimbursed by this program. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to EOE no later than August 6, 2023. If a multi-year award is made EOE will issue a similar multi-year contract agreement that will complete June 30, 2024.
5. Grantees will forfeit any remaining award unused after the contract expires. EOE shall give due consideration to any extenuating circumstances presented in writing by the applicant and may waive this restriction at its discretion.

Review of Applications

Threshold Criteria Screening: Submissions will be screened for completeness, conformity to the program requirements, and timeliness of response. Reviewers will determine the eligibility of each applicant, evaluate applications and confirm the alignment to Workforce Skills Cabinet Regional Planning Blueprint and relevance to meeting the needs of priority sectors, critical occupations and aligned to strategies identified in the plan. Submissions that are incomplete, non-conforming, or late may not be considered.

Review Committee: A review committee will review and score all eligible submissions and recommendations will be presented to the Workforce Skills Cabinet for final approval. The Executive Office of Education reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant to ensure that the review committee has a complete understanding of the program concept. The review committee may be comprised of designees from the Executive Office of

Executive Office of Education, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Higher Education, Executive Office of Administration and Finance, as well as representatives from MA Life Sciences Center, Commonwealth Corporation, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and various other government, business, and/or industry leaders.

Selection Criteria: Applications will be reviewed and scored based on overall scores in the following selection criteria areas, with a possible total of 100 base points.

Notification of Grant Award Status; All applicants will be notified of their award status by email. Applicants that are identified for an award may be required to submit a copy of the organization's most recent audited financial statement prior to grant announcement or the execution of a final contract. In addition, prior to the grant award, Executive Office of Education staff may review an organization's fiscal systems and internal controls to verify that the organization has the capacity to manage public grant funds and administer the program.

Additional Evaluation Notes: In addition to the scoring system outlined above, the Workforce Skills Cabinet (Executive Office of Education) reserves the right to consider only submissions that, in our sole judgment, are complete and responsive to the solicitation's requirements and include all required application components

Exploration Grant Application Forms and Guidance

The following pages comprise the application forms required for this grant program. A complete proposal packet includes the following components: cover page, proposal narrative, proposed budget and letters of partnerships. Unless otherwise indicated, all sections must be completed. Complete instructions on how to use the online application system are found here: <https://webportalapp.com/appform/mastemexploregrant>

The information in the table below will be required to be input in the online application

Project Profile				
Name of Lead Applicant				
Amount of Funds Requested		\$		
Lead Applicant Contact Information				
Role	Name / Title	Address	Phone	Email
Primary Contact Person ^ (notified upon decision of grant award)				

Authorized Signatory (authorized to commit organization)				
Fiscal Contact (fiscally responsible for project funds and submitting invoices)				
Project Manager , if known (contact over the course of the project)				
Partnership Members and Contact Information Please list the organizations and contact information for all required* <u>and</u> additional partners.				
Education and Industry Partner Organization Type	Organization Name	Address	Contact Name / Title	Phone / Email

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Grant Narrative. Applicants must answer all of the questions below. Do not skip any questions or change the order of the questions.

1. Please describe the motivation of your exploratory team comprised of a quailed Community College, Industry and High School Partner (s) in applying for the MA STEM TECH Exploratory Grant. Your response should include an overview of the primary vision for the model being considered. *Response limited to 500 words.*
2. Please provide an overview of your preliminary program design focus. Include a description of the industry sector, potential lead industry partner, targeted occupations and certifications, and the Community College Certificate and/or Degree credentials. Please note how the program focus aligns to labor maker and credential needs identified in the region's Workforce Skills Cabinet Regional Blueprint. *Response limited to 500 words.*
3. Please provide examples of past partnering activities. Provide a preliminary description of how launching a MA STEM TECH school may complement or build off experiences with Innovation Pathway or Early College pathway programs, or other types of partnerships. *Response limited to 250 words.*
4. This grant prioritizes program models that plan to significantly increase access and equity for underrepresented students in higher education by increasing the college going rates for those students. Please describe how this grant opportunity will specifically allow the partnership to accomplish these goals. *Response limited to 500 words.*
5. Explain your proposed partnership to incorporate sufficient wraparound services from the high school and IHE partner to promote academic success and completion, taking into consideration the needs of diverse populations of students including prior to and during enrollment in college courses. *Response limited to 500 words*
6. Explain how your proposed program's plan will expose students to a variety of STEM career opportunities, for example, by providing opportunities for learning, targeted workforce and career skills development, career counseling, and elements of experiential workplace learning. *Response limited to 500 words*
7. Applicants are required to submit a completed template budget for this competitive grant funding identifying the funding that will support each of the partners. Applicants are not required to provide in-kind and/or cash match support however consideration maybe given to applicant's documenting relevant employers or other non-state or federal resources commitments.

8. Attach a letter noting commitment to partnering in development of a STEM Tech Career Academy from the IHE and High School Partner(s). Attachment of a partnering letter from an industry partner is not required however additional consideration maybe given to applicant's doing so.

Assurances

1. We commit to developing a STEM Tech Career Academy program that will meet the mission and Guiding Principles, with a dedicated focus on increasing equity and college access for underrepresented students.
2. We commit to establishing the capacity needed to ensure that the planning process related to the development of a STEM Tech Career Academy model is on a regularly established schedule through June 30, 2023.
3. We acknowledge a commitment to submit a plan to start up a STEM Tech Career Academy in FY24 to enroll students no later than FY25.